

Taking Action: Addressing Low Level Lead Exposures in Adults

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What is OLPPP?

- Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
- Fee-based; created in 1991
- Public health surveillance (tracking)
- Case Management
- Education & outreach

Background

- Well-known, historically recognized hazard
- One reason for creation of EPA, OSHA
- Environmental lead levels (air, soil) have decreased; lower body burdens in both adults and children
- Currently, no level of lead in blood is considered “acceptable” for children

Background, con't:

- Great progress in reducing children's "BLL of concern"
- "Acceptable" levels of blood lead for adults remain at levels set by OSHA using 30-year old data
- New evidence of harmful health effects at much lower levels than previously thought
- "Elevated" formerly defined as 50 – 60 ug/dL; now, BLLs 5 – 10 ug/dL considered "elevated"

Health Effects at Lower BLLs:

- Hypertension
- Kidney dysfunction
- Cognitive dysfunction
- Adverse reproductive effects
- Environmental Health Perspectives Mini-monograph:
<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2006/9784/9784.pdf> *(and related articles)*

OLPPP's Action Plan

- Surveillance: Tracking workers with lower BLLs; revising Epi. Case definition(s)
- "Spreading the word" about health concerns at lower levels
- Providing multi-media guidance to employers, workers, health-care providers
- Ultimately, want to see OSHA adopt adequately protective lead standards and lead industries improve practices ~ other policy options?

Taking Action: Surveillance / Epi. Case Definitions

- Revised “Occupational Health Indicators” (now: 10+, was: 25+ and 40+)
- ABLES
- Healthy People 2020
- Nationally Notifiable Condition list

Taking Action: Surveillance / OLPPP Activities

- Contact all workers reported with BLLs 10+ ~ 100/month
- Obtain complete information for levels 10+
- Present all data at 10+ (not 25+)

Taking Action: Spreading the Word

- Workers: “Workplace Hazard Alert” ~
“New Health Dangers from Lead”
 - Health effects
 - Routes of exposure, “too much”
 - To discuss with MD
 - Workplace prevention activities
 - Lead Standards

Taking Action: Spreading the Word

Employers:

- “Workplace Hazard Alert” (*in progress*)
- *DVD: “Lead’s Revenge”*
- Newsletter

Taking Action: Spreading the Word

Health Care Providers:

- Web-based curriculum
- Medical Management Guidelines
- Ray Meister: rmeister@cdph.ca.gov

Taking Action: Policy Options

- Contracted with UC Berkeley's Health Research for Action: Policy options to be considered in light of new health information
- *"Perspectives"* – M. Kosnett and HRA

Taking Action: Policy Options

- Eliminate lead
- Revise OSHA standards
- Reward compliance
- Employer education
- Worker education
- Enforceable reporting regulations

Thank You!

- Michael DiBartolomeis, OLPPP Chief
- Maisoon Ayish
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